Molly Cohen
Senior Project Paper
ART 499

Senior Project

I began University of Tampa originally as an International Business major, after a year of taking some of the required classes I realized it was not for me; I needed a major that I could have control of, a major that that would channel my creative side, a major that would not make me regret spending 4 years (and the rest of my life) doing something that I do not enjoy. I switched to the major of New Media Production with hopes that I could learn to develop as a person both creatively and passionately. I began the major with no major previous experience in art or interactive media. I learned quickly, and appreciated the various subjects that this major touched upon so that I could develop and find my strengths, learn my weaknesses, and develop my ultimate passion.

I have always had a passion for music, since high school I knew that eventually, my ideal dream would be to work in the music industry and contribute to it in some way or another. Taking recording and electronic music classes in high school has played a role in developing my insatiable passion for music; when I discovered that this New Media Production major offered classes in audio production and sound, I knew it was the perfect major to explore my interest in music production and develop strengths in other subjects to make me a well rounded individual in the media production field. After 3 years of learning various aspects of Media Production, I was at first stumped on an idea for a senior project. I was stumped because although my passion has always been music, I have learned so many things about different focuses of media production. Acquired knowledge of video production, web-design, photography, writing, and the endless

production possibilities that could be created adobe programs made it hard for me to choose one focus for a project. My original idea was to produce a song, but I did not think that would be enough to constitute for a senior project, so I immediately overlooked it and considered either creating a new website or completely transforming the one I had been working on for my portfolio. After the accumulation of stress that some online production assignments have given me, I realized that web production is not my strength or passion, so why would I create a project on something that I am not passionate about? I then started pondering the idea of creating a themed video of people who face everyday struggles of anxiety and how they overcome it. After starting the process, I realized I could not get enough participation for the video, so I once again disregarded that idea. Half-way through the semester the built up stress of not having a secured project idea began to creep up on me, and after a long phone call with my father, he encouraged me to just stick with my passion and my initial idea of producing a song, even if it would not be considered "enough" for a senior project. After all, I feel that the senior project is purely a reflection of the knowledge that this major has gave me and how to combine that knowledge with my acquired passion and manifest that through a creation.

I began my process sitting in the music lab and figuring out what type of production I wanted to create. I wanted to create an electronic based composition that incorporated synthesizers, a strong bass, and a catchy and rhythmic tempo. I wanted this composition to make me want to dance, to make someone hearing it for the first time say "wow, what's this" and start dancing. When composing music in the past, my creation process always begins with me brainstorming certain rhythms or melodies that I myself would enjoy listening to; I listen back to some of my favorite electronic pieces and

dissect the components that so passionately draw me to them. I began by first creating the melodic part, the part that will tie the whole composition together. After creating the melody and adding in the synthesizers, I added the bass, drums, high hats, and other sound components to tie the whole piece together. I created the entire song out of pure midi software instrument tracks, meaning that I created each track by scratch, playing it onto the keyboard instead of using pre-made loops. The entire process of creating my piece took a few weeks. It was then time to create the visual aspect.

As soon as I was composing the song, I knew that I wanted my video to be a unique and exciting visual experience. I wanted the video to enhance and amplify the overall mood and tone of the composition, I wanted to see people dance to it, to see my creation have a physical impact on people; I decided to film a session of an expert hip-hop class in downtown Tampa. After a week and a half of trying to get in contact with Vyb Dance Company via email and phone, I was finally able to get in touch with them.

After filming this session, I could not have been more excited, the energy and style of the dancers was exactly the type of footage I was looking for, and I got it! Not for long though. Unfortunately, due to a malfunction of my SD card, I lost all of the footage about two weeks before this project was supposed to be finished. I panicked for a few days. I panicked because not only had this footage been exactly the idea I was going for, I panicked because I was going to be away at a festival the upcoming weekend and did not have time to try to re-contact the dance company, being that It took a week and a half to hear back from them the first time around. After some thought, I realized I had to compromise. I decided I was going to shoot some footage at the festival and layer this footage over a screen recording of an interactive mandala that I had created. I wanted to

create a dreamy, almost psychedelic, yet uplifting visual experience to accompany my

composition. Although this was not my original idea, after editing the footage and

putting the whole piece together, the video ended up fitting into to the aesthetic that I was

going for. The stress of this project was worth the end result, I could not be more happy

and proud of myself for overcoming the obstacles thrown at me in such short notice.

Overall, despite the SD card malfunction, I enjoyed the entire process of recording my

composition and creating a visual experience to accompany it.